News Releases - 2007

The Canada Council's next 50 years: Challenges, opportunities cited in 2006-07 Annual Report

Ottawa, October 24, 2007 - The Canada Council for the Arts is entering its second half-century optimistic about the future despite the challenges that continue to face Canadian artists and arts funders.

"As the Canada Council for the Arts celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2007, it is fair to say that at no previous time have its challenges been as compelling, or its opportunities as great," Robert Sirman said in his introduction to the Council's 2006-07 Annual Report, which was released today. "The world continues to change – demographically, economically, technologically, socially – and so too do the arts. The response of arts funders must be creative, flexible and attuned to the varying needs of a diverse and growing arts community."

In 2006-07, the Canada Council awarded more than $152 million in funding to individual artists and arts organizations in some 650 communities across Canada, from Carbonear (Newfoundland and Labrador) to Dawson City (Yukon). This constitutes the largest amount of funding awarded by the Council in its 50-year history, thanks to the federal government's decision to increase the Council's parliamentary appropriation by $20 million in 2006-07 and $30 million in 2007-08. (The government has since announced that the additional $30 million in 2007-08 will remain in the Council's budget on an ongoing basis).

Nearly $140 million was awarded in the form of grants, as well as $3.5 million in prizes and fellowships and $9.1 million in payments to writers, translators and illustrators under the Public Lending Right program, which compensates authors for the availability of their books in Canadian public libraries.

The impact of the increased funding was a theme throughout the 2006-07 Annual Report. In her Annual Report message, Canada Council Chair Karen Kain noted that "thanks to this funding, 561 organizations throughout Canada will be able to consolidate their activities of creation, production, development and dissemination."

"This major investment will have a lasting impact for the Canadian cultural fabric and for Canadian citizens everywhere," she said.

The report describes a number of initiatives which will be possible thanks to the additional funding, including expanded activities by the Vancouver Art Gallery, Musique Multi-Montréal, Nunavut Independent Television Network, Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, the Canadian Opera Company, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Alberta Ballet, the book publisher McClelland and Stewart, and Robert Lepage's theatre company Ex Machina.

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In addition to descriptions and images of a wide range of Canada Council activities – including events marking the Council's 50th anniversary – the Annual Report includes a wide range of statistics about the Council, the artists and organizations it funds and the arts in Canada. For example:

- 2,204 grants were awarded to individual artists, while 4,430 grants went to arts organizations, including theatre, dance and opera companies, orchestras, art galleries and artist-run centres, film cooperatives and book publishers.
- 778 artists and arts professionals from 183 different Canadian communities sat on Canada Council peer assessment committees, which evaluate grant applications.
- More than 15,400 Canadian authors received payments through the Public Lending Right Commission.
- 185 Canadian artists and scholars received Canada Council prizes or fellowships.
- More than 1,000 literary readings in 127 communities took place thanks to Canada Council funding.
- The number of artists in Canada increased by 29 per cent between 1991 and 2001.
- 82 per cent of Canadians attended an arts and cultural event in 2003, according to a 2004 Decima survey.
- The annual investment by the Canada Council was $5.29 per Canadian in 2006-07.

The full text of the Annual Report, as well as detailed profiles of Canada Council funding by province or territory, is available on the Canada Council's web site.

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